Mr. John Takes His Bath

IN THE olden days, when Rome was as beautiful as she was brilliant and as brilliant as she was base, the bath was an institution. It was not an accessory to the toilet as it is at the present time. It was a place where profound statesman and polished patrician and perfumed epicurean met to lounge and visit and discuss affairs of state and social importance. They went there with much ceremony and pomp, attended by their slaves and arrayed in gorgeous attire. They reclined indolently under awnings of burning crimson and royal purple and they feasted and drank and spoke of the beauties and the sonorous cadences of Homeric verse. And they watched the sunlight glint and glitter on the perfumed waters, turning them to limpid azure at their feet, while the low, plaintive voice of some bronze-skinned harpist rose and fell in musical monotone, sweet as love and sad as death, lulling their epicurean senses to somnolent content. It was all lovely with the loveliness of art and the poetry of unshackled paganism. It had all the dignity of an age that was sublime in its sensuousness and superb in its sin. It was a scene that had all the color and fire and barbaric splendor beloved of the Caesars. It has filled the dreaming eyes of centuries of painters and been the inspiration and the despair of brain and chisel.

It was all this. But to-day there is change. Paterfamilias still takes his bath. It is a weekly necessity, not a ceremony. It is preceded and followed by tri-weekly or daily "sponges," but it 's a duty to self and community, like paying the taxes and going to church. And he observes it in the same manner and catalogues it on his mental engagement list under the same heading. He regards it as an unavoidable but regrettable waste of time, instead of in the Romanesque light of sensuous pleasure and social enjoyment. The perfumed waters are to him not languorous with the incense of Araby, but redolent with bath soap and ammonia. The marble steps and waves of limpid azure have gone glimmering, whither he wots not nor cares as he lifts the soiled clothes basket, the baby's rocker, a dress-suit case and a preserve kettle out of the tile bathtub and turns on both taps.

And, to begin at the beginning, the modus operandi of paterfamilias on bath night as follows: His wife commences by mentioning at dinner that this is his bath night. He does not answer with much enthusiasm and the matter drops. Then he rises from the table, lights a cigar, sits down by the study-lamp and hides himself behind the paper. His better half suggests that he take his bath early to-night and he murmurs:

"Eh? Oh, yes. The British certainly bit a bigger mouthful than they can comfortably masticate. Serves 'em right, drat 'em! Turn the lamp higher, will you?"

He reads steadily for some time and his wife finishes some darning, puts her sewing materials neatly away and remarks cheerfully:

"Don't forget your bath, dear."

"Bath? Nope. Say, that was a bad smashup on the X. & Q. Now, why in blazes they can't manage this train business better beats me. They've got their signal system, with all sorts of frills on it, and yet they can't stop at a crossroad or water tank but what the next train has to plump into 'em and send everybody to kingdom come. Now, if I were running a road—"

"Are these Billy's cuffs, John?"

"No; mine. Say, if that boy don't leave my linen alone there's goin' to be trouble. I never wore my father's clothes. If I had I'd have been taken for some callisthenic exercises in the woodshed. And his father's no better than—I mean, he's as good as—say, Billy's aching for a lickin' and he'll get it one of these days. You'll see."

He turns another page and there is a long pause.

Presently his wife looks at the clock. "My! It's after ten. Sha'n't I turn on the water in the bath, John?"

Some inarticulate grunts issue unmusically from behind the paper and Mrs. John rocks back and forth gently. Soon she yawns a little and rubs her eyes sleepily. Then she studies the top of John's head doubtfully.

"John, dear, it's growing late. Won't you take your bath now?"

John dear jerks another page over and remarks amiably that he'll take it in a minute, but why in the name of all the gods they want to run that duffer for reelection is beyond comprehension. It is just such skates that don't know enough to come in when it rains real hard that seem to get in office somehow. They and blacklegs. Now, if he had been in office he would have known the party what was what. In the first place, he would—

Mrs. John thinks she hears the baby stir and disappears in the bedroom. When she returns her husband has slid down in his chair, with his head close to the lamp, and is dead to the world in the stock quotations. She tidies up the room, then hesitates and says finally:

"John, dear, if you don't mind, I think I will go to bed. Will you take your bath soon?"

Something like "Awri—gw'on—finish s'article" floats from the depths of the newspaper and Mrs. John thankfully departs.

"The towels are in the bathroom, dear. And your robe is hanging on the door," she says from the bedroom.

"M'hm. Lemme lone 'n goterbed," rumbles from the stock quotations.

"Oh! and that new soap is in the medicine chest, John!"

"Da—awri—awri! Jus'so," and silence reigns.

Mrs. John is just dozing off comfortably as she is suddenly startled into wakefulness with:

"Mary, wherein thunder are my bath towels?"

She tells him they are in the bathroom and he wants to know why on earth she had not said so instead of letting him hunt the flat for half an hour for towels when he was worn out and so sleepy he could hardly keep his eyes open.

She says nothing, but sinks back on the pillows and has just closed her eyes, as he dances in in a condition of extreme bad temper and distinctly immodest attire and demands to know if she has used his bath robe for a door mat or sold it to the junk man, as it certainly is not in the flat. She tells him it is hanging on the back of the bathroom door and he dances out, reminding her that if he dies of quick consumption it will be her fault.

As she turns her pillow over to the cool side he puts his head around the portiere and asks, with intense mildness, if she has given his flesh brush away as a prize at some of her cinch parties. He knows he used to own one, but cannot find it, which is not at all strange in that house, anyway. She reminds him that he gave it to the baby to play hobby-horse with that morning. He stalks off, stumbles over the furniture, lights all the gas in the flat, with the aid of several matches and a good deal of eloquence, and Mrs. John finally creeps wearily out of bed and finds the brush on the bathroom floor. Then she retires to her bed.

In two minutes exactly her lord calls her in tones that cause her to run to the bathroom. And she finds him garbed airily in a moderate-sized bath towel and a liberal supply of what looks like brown paint. His face is quite purple and his language profane.

"Iodine! Iodine!" he sputters. "Look at me, will ye? Keepin yer dashed soap in yer dashed medicine chest as though it was some cure for the measles. How was I to know that dashed stopper would come out, eh? Look at me! I'm a sight. And the dashed stuff has to wear off—nothing but time and prayer and sand paper will move it. And I found everything in there but soap—soap and receipted bills! Everything—from cure for cramps to your marriage certificate. Wipe me off, will ye? That is, what will come off. I know my back looks like a British war map of Africa. I'll go into a museum as the only genuine tattooed man. Of all the places to say you keep soap, and all the time I suppose it is behind your Venus di Medici in the parlor, with a ten-cent cup and saucer standing on it. That's called artistic furnishing nowadays. Don't take all the skin off my spine! There, that'll do. G'wan to bed and maybe I can take my bath in peace. Have you got any washing powder or lye, seeing there is no soap?"

Mrs. John hands down two cakes of soap from the third shelf of the medicine chest and her husband snorts as he grabs a cake and steps into the bathtub. She goes back to bed and this time falls sound asleep. It seems to her that she has slept about five minutes when she is aroused by the gas flaring vividly in her face. Shading her eyes, she raises herself on one elbow and sees her lord and master turning the bureau drawers upside down on the floor.

"What are you looking for, John?"

Her husband sits back on his heels and grips the bathrobe around him with both hands.

"Looking for?" he remarks. "Looking for? At this time of night? What would any sane person be looking for, do yer suppose? For one of my dress-suit shirts, maybe, or a pair of silk socks with sunflowers embroidered on 'em. Have I got a nightshirt to my name or haven't I? Or have you cut 'em all down for Billy? Have I any rights in this house, anyway? I used to have some clothes before I had a family, but I'll be blamed if I have anything any more."

"My dear, your nightshirt is airing over the back of that chair beside you," says Mrs. John.

"Air—is it? Well, why in thunder didn't you say so? Here I've gone through all the furniture from the chiffonier to your writing-desk looking for that shirt rather than wake you up. But I'm the only one that seems to have any consideration for other people in this family."

Mrs. John yawns a little and turns over as her lord struggles into the nightshirt. He buttons the shirt at the neck, then steps over the chaos of underclothes that he has deposited on the carpet, shoves a pile of laces and gloves that he has emptied from the bureau drawers aside with one foot and winds his watch. Then he shakes his sleeping wife by the shoulder and asks her where the keys of the buffet are, as he knows he is in for a good cold unless he can take something to ward it off. He is drowsily informed that the keys are in full view on her comb tray on the dressing table and he departs for the dining-room, remarking that if people would only leave his clothes and things where he could find them without the aid of a microscope he would be grateful. Later on she is aroused with a request for her manicure scissors, but she objects mildly and gives him her penknife. Five minutes later she is startled by a fervent declaration that he would like to see her knife in another country farther south, and she gets up to hunt court-plaster.

Mrs. John feels rather tired by this time and the next morning she has a headache, but when she reads his letters from New York, in which he says he is so enjoying his Turkish baths, which he is taking regularly, she thinks of bath night at home and sighs retrospectively and wonders much.—Chicago Chronicle.

Reward of Merit.

The city directory men, says the Chicago Tribune, are entitled to honorary membership in the Two Million club.

Wanted No More Science

They Would Rather Turn Honest Than Go Through Such an Experience Again.

MY RESPECTABLE friend, Mr. Simbell, who had left the skilled profession of housebreaking for the more humdrum but safer occupation of coal dealer, is a man with a considerable sense of humor.

"I can tell you a story about me and Andy and Patsy Dallington that isn't bad fun," he said to me one day.

"It was like this. Andy and me often met at the Angel, in Brixton, and one day we were together and pretty hard up. Well, in comes Patsy—a fellow I never cared much for, although he and Andy chummed together. We saw he'd something on his mind, and I thought he wanted me gone, but Andy would make me stop for it. Patsy had been down near Leatherhead to see some friends, and he thought he'd spotted a good thing.

"'Ever heard of Sir Miles Harold, sir? O, you have. Well, then, you know that he was nearly a millionaire, if not quite. His father was a big contractor, but Miles was one of them scientific gents, always bothering with chemicals and things of that sort.

"Patsy came down with the news that it was a place worth cracking. Sir Miles had got some splendid gold and silver plate, and, as the house wasn't well guarded, it was an easy job.

"'You crack it, then, Patsy,' ses I. 'I'm a bit superstitious about scientific gents.'

"'It's as easy as winkin',' he ses. 'The old fool thinks nothing but about his playthings.'

"Andy looked at me and winked, and then told Patsy to dry up while him and me talked it over. At last we decided that Andy should go down and have a look at the job hisself, and if it was all right we should go in partnership over it.

"He went the next day. He was there a day or two and came back quite enthusiastic, and we set to work at once.

"We hired a greengrocer's cart, with a fast pony, to do the job with. Patsy drove down to Leatherhead, and Andy and me went by train. Patsy was to look after the cart while Andy and me got the swag, but the programme had to be altered. The morning we set out I slipped on the wet pavement, and came down on my arm. It wasn't broken, but it was badly bruised and my wrist was sprained, and I had to be odd man out 'stead of Patsy.

"I drew up outside the house as near to the grounds as I could get, and my chums went on. It was a capital night, no moon, but starlight.

"Patsy had marked a swing window to the larder, and, being a slim chap, he wriggled through and went round to the dining-room window and let Andy in.

"The best of the plate was kept in a cabinet in the dining-room. It only took Patsy a minute or two to pick the lock, and Andy sucked in his breath at the sight inside. They were busy storing it in the bag, when suddenly the room blazed with light—electric light, of course—and a quiet voice said: 'Please put your hands above your heads, or I must shoot.'

"It was such a knockdown surprise that their hands went up almost by themselves, and they screwed round their heads to see Sir Miles—a pale, dreamy-looking gent, with a big forehead—standing in a doorway with a revolver covering them.

"'Don't give me the trouble to shoot, gentlemen; it would make such a nasty mess on the carpet,' ses he. 'Carruthers, bring me some cord.'

"A big young fellow stepped forward with a laugh and began fastening their hands and elbows together, after which he hobbled their feet.

"When they were trussed up Sir Miles commanded them to follow him, and they shuffled along, with the young chap behind. He led them into the workshop and made them sit down.

"'Very interesting capture, Caruthers,' said Sir Miles. 'Burglars?'

"'Yes, sir,' ses Carruthers.

"'You are not very intelligent members of your profession,' he ses to Andy and Pat, 'or you would not have come here. Carruthers, oblige me by going outside and coming in by the window as these gentlemen did. I want to show them how stupid they were.'

"'Yes, sir,' he ses, and he went out, and presently a bell close to them began ringing softly. 'He is getting through the window now,' ses Sir Miles. 'And this bell'—pointing to another—'rang when you opened the cabinet. You were exceedingly foolish.'

"'If you'll let us go, sir,' ses Andy, speaking his politest, 'we'll never be foolish no more. You're too clever a gent for us, sir.'

"'Carruthers,' he ses when his man came in again, 'this foolish person suggests that I should let them go. He does not know how well timed this visit is. A capital opportunity for trying my new battery, Carruthers.'

"Carruthers screwed up his face.

"'I don't think I should, sir,' ses he.

"'Why not?'

"'It might kill them, sir.'

"'O,' ses Sir Miles, as careless as you please, 'they're lusty fellows; and, besides, they broke into my house.'

"Poor Andy and Patsy, sir, were in a bad way. Andy see he was sweating till it trickled down him, and Patsy was taken different, for he was shivering till his teeth chattered. What it was they didn't know, but it was plain it was something awful. They begged Sir Miles again and again—Patsy was crying—to have mercy and let 'em go. When that did no good they fell to swearing awful, and threatened Sir Miles, but it didn't make a ha-porth of difference. He only smiled and said it was too good an opportunity to be lost."

"He and Carruthers cleared the bottles and things off two tables, and lifted Patsy on one and Andy on the other.

"'I'm afraid, sir,' Carruthers began, as he got out some awful-looking instrument, but Sir Miles ses:

"'O, they're strong—they'll stand it. And, anyway, I don't care.'

"They touched Andy with the instrument in the back. A terrible pain darted through him, he said; the worst he had ever suffered, and he couldn't help screaming. Then they tried it on Patsy, and he suffered the same.

"'Pooh!' ses Sir Miles; 'turn on a stronger current. I'm deeply indebted to these gentlemen for this opportunity.'

"'And that fiend,' went on Andy, 'gave us another dose worse than the other. The pain was something awful.'

"How long it lasted they couldn't say; but at last the two torturers whispered together and then went to the groaning men and examined their backs.

"'Good heavens, sir—look!' ses Carruthers. 'We'd better send for the doctor, or—'

"'No,' ses Sir Miles; 'I'll give them a note to take to one of the hospitals in town. They're in no danger for another six hours, and they can almost walk it in the time.'

"He sat down and wrote it, and then Patsy and Andy were set loose. They looked awful, they said, and Sir Miles gave them a stiff dose of brandy.

"'Now, gentlemen,' he ses to 'em, 'I'm very much obliged to you for coming here. I have been enabled to carry out an experiment that will make me famous. Hurry off to London as quick as you can, and give this note to one of the 'ospital surgeons. The doctor you give it to will understand from my letter how to cure you; but if you don't want to be paralyzed for life, you'd better get to London in less than six hours.'

"Now, I'd been getting in a funk, sir, waiting for 'em. I expected them back inside half an hour, and they'd been gone more than an hour. My nerves were like a jelly, and I was just ready for a bolt when I heard a door slam. I knew then there was something wrong, and started off; but before I could get into the road my two chums came down the drive. You never saw anything like their faces, sir!

"'We're done for!' ses Andy. 'If we can't reach the 'orspital in three hours we're dead men!'

"Bit by bit, sir, as we flew along I got the story out of 'em. It made me feel quite sick, sir, and thankful I was that I'd hurt my hand and wasn't there.

"I got 'em to town in about two hours, but that didn't comfort 'em. The pain was something awful, they said.

"I told 'em at the 'orspital that my two mates were in a bad way and wanted attending to immediate, and I'd a note about them for the head doctor. There was very little delay, for everybody who saw their faces knew they must be pretty bad.

"They were taken into the receiving ward, and the doctor came, and I gave him the note. He read it more than once, it seemed, and he pulled some of the wriest faces I've ever seen.

"'Let me see your backs,' he ses at last. 'So you fell into Sir Miles Harold's clutches, did you? Lucky to be alive!'

"He examined their backs careful, and it made them breathe free when he said: 'Well, you came in time. I'll just put a blister on you, and you'll be all right in a day or two.'

"He put on the blisters, and then put Sir Miles' note in an envelope and sealed it.

"'It is not necessary to come here again,' he ses; 'but to-morrow you can go to the nearest chemist, give him this letter, and he'll know what to do for you.'

"We all thanked him, and then went to Andy's place. When the whisky bottle was on the table we felt better. We relieved our feelings for a good half-hour by threatening how we'd be revenged on Mr. Miles.

"And then Patsy proposed we should see what he said in the letter. I can't remember it now word for word, but it was something to the effect that the writer, Sir Miles Harold, had caught the bearers in the act of stealing his plate, and had determined to frighten them.

"It was a great success, for, though all he did was to prick their backs with a bundle of needles, and then redden the skin with some carbolic acid, they believed their life was in jeopardy unless they hastened to a 'osspital. Would the doctor who read it carry the joke a little farther and blister them?

"I wanted to laugh, but I was afraid. At last Andy jumped up suddenly, cussing something awful, and pulled off that blister; and Patsy did the same. And then I laughed till I nearly killed myself, and at last they laughed, too.

"I've never heard anything to equal it, sir; but I know to this day Andy and Patsy couldn't see the humor of it. There's one thing I know—neither of 'em will try for the plate of any scientific gents. Andy's said many a time he'd rather turn honest."—London Answers.

Not Particular.

"My son, I know a girl who would be a good match for you! But what qualities would you require if you were going to marry?"

"The girl must be pretty."

"What else?"

"She must be musical."

"Is that all?"

"Is that all? She must be rich!"

"Then she'd be crazy if she married you!"

"Oh, well, I don't object to her being crazy!"—Lustige Blaetter.

PECULIARITIES OF ENGLISH.

Little Jerry Solves a Difficult Problem with the Most Consummate Ease.

A lady who takes a great interest in ragged-school work tells this excellent anecdote, says Pearson's Weekly.

The other day the lesson was on the peculiarities of our language. Words that are pronounced alike and spelt differently and words that are pronounced differently and spelt alike were discussed at length.

She explained the difference between lead the metal and led the verb, and the children quite understood.

Then she took the two words "week" and "weak." She explained the difference in the meaning and use, and then called up a little fellow, aged five, to use the word "weak" in a sentence.

The little fellow thought a moment, then answered:

"A weak old woman."

The teacher nodded her approval.

"Now, Jerry," she said, turning to another little boy, "you take the word 'week' and use it in a sentence."

Jerry thought a minute, and then he, too, replied:

"A week-old baby."

Paralyzing Figures.

A Jesuit priest now in South Africa writes to the boys in the New York college where he was formerly a professor: "Nine in the blessed language is diheramanwanmngwahela, but this is nothing to 999, which is mashumiamagduamahna-manwanamangwahela-anamashumihamahera - manwanaingovhalea-gowakadiberanamanwanamgwahela."

FARMS FOR SALE,

By The Peninsula Land & Immigration Co.

No. 81. 922 acres. Price $45 per acre.

750 acres cleared, lying along the James river, all the land in a high state of improvement. Large dwelling, barns, and all kinds of out houses, all in good repair. Land very rich, soil a black loam. Good for corn, wheat, timothy, clover, blue grass and oats, one of the greatest stock farms in the country. Beautiful springs and wells on the place. Anyone who wishes a fine stock farm here it is. Terms one-fourth cash balance on any terms the purchaser might choose, interest 6 per cent.

No. 82. 626 acres. Price $25 per acre.

400 acres cleared. Land all in a high state of cultivation. Land suitable for grain or trucking, soil a dark sandy loam. Near the James river. Dwelling, barns and out-houses. Good wells of water on the place. Terms one-third cash, balance on easy terms with interes at 6 per cent.

No. 83. 732 acres. Price $25 per acre.

Nearly all cleared and fenced off in nine fields. Land a black loam and very rich. Good for all kinds of grasses. Farm buildings of all kinds. Stable for forty horses. This farm joins the other preceding farms. All over-looking the James river. All convenient to post-office, stores, steamboat wharf, and is in a beautiful location. Terms easy.

No. 80. 207 acres. Price $1,200.

150 acres cleared, balance in timber of pine oak, hickory, gum, ash, poplar, &c. No houses on tract but a good place for the money. Terms made known on application.

No. 23. 450 acres. Price $3,000.

450 acres, 150 cleared, the balance in timber. Good dwelling and large fair out houses. Good orchard of apples, pears, peaches and apricots. Two wells in the yard and one in the barnyard. Mineral water on the place. Terms, one-third cash, balance on reasonable time.

No. 18. 700 acres. Price, $15 per acre.

700 acres in Charles City county. Price $15 per acre. One mile from Providence Forge. Bounded on the north by the Chickohominy river, which furnishes a good fishery on the property. One-half of the land is river bottom land, a deep, black loam and very rich. One-half upland. Of this tract about one-half is cleared and fenced. It has a beautiful, large, new mansion just built, new barns and out houses which cost $4,000. The new house stands in a beautiful, shady yard on a high elevation which overlooks the entire country. The balance of the land is in timber and most easily cleared. There is two sulphur springs on this property, also other springs and running water. Here is a great stock farm for some one o land enough for a number of families. The land must be seen to be appreciated. Terms made known on application.

No. 5. 600 acres. $10,000

A fine and desirable home; 600 acres, 250 cleared, balance in saw and cord-wood timber, with about one mile of frontage along the James river. Most of the land in a high state of cultivation, one dwelling of six rooms, within 1-2 mile of Grove station. Two large barns sheds and outbuilding, 2 good wells of water, one in the houseyard and one in the barnyard, a fine young orchard of about 4 acres of all kinds of fruit just in its prime. A beautiful, shady yard nicely fenced. All the cleared land fenced. One house on the banks of the James of 4 rooms, overlooking the James river. This tract could be cut up into 2 fine farms. Land nearly all lies well, Plenty of marl and fine springs of water, also streams that never fail running through this tract the year round, all for $10,000. Terms easy. This is a desirable stock or truck farm. Only 4 mile from Williamsburg, 1 2 mile from a railroad station, near schools, stores, post office and churches.

Write to
JOHN DAHN Williamsburg, Va.